

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action was issued on pending claims 1-15. Claims 1 and 11-15 stand rejected, and claims 2-10 stand objected to. In this Response, claims 1 and 3-15 have been amended, claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice and no claims have been added. Thus, claims 1 and 3-15 are pending in the application.

Applicants invite the Examiner to call Applicants' Representative to discuss any issues with this application.

Allowable Claims

At page 3 of the Office Action, claims 2-10 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but noted as being allowable if rewritten in independent for including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants thank the Examiner for the notice of allowable claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to include allowable claim 2, and claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice. The dependencies of claims 6 and 9 have been revised in view of the cancellation of claim 2. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 3-15 are allowable.

Claims 1 and 3-15 have also been amended to remove the reference numbers and letters. Claims 1 and 3-15 have also been amended to be consistent with U.S. practice.

Thus, Applicants submit claims 1 and 3-15 are allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103(a)

At pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 11-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese patent document 2-283306. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to include allowable claim 2. Thus, claim 1 is allowable over JP '306. The dependent claims are allowable at least for the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Thus, Applicants submit that the §103 rejections should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance and request a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Respectfully submitted,

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